



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE
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CHICAGO, IL 60604

NEWS RELEASE

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209 Become Newest Americans in Special Citizenship Ceremony in Rockford

(Chicago) — In a naturalization ceremony held by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), 209 new citizens were sworn in today at the Rock Valley College in Rockford. The ceremony is part of INS' ongoing efforts to help eligible immigrants become U.S. citizens. Candidates for today's ceremony included persons from 49 different countries, with a total of 27% from Mexico, 6% from Laos, and 5% from India.

"Our country's greatness is deeply rooted in our rich immigration tradition," said INS Deputy District Director, Ray Adams, who gave the opening remarks at the ceremony. "New citizens bring unique cultural, scientific, artistic and economic talents that result in immeasurable contributions to our nation."

In today's Rockford ceremony, 209 new citizens were sworn in at Rock Valley College Physical Education Center by the Honorable Judge Suzanne Conlon, U.S. District Court of Northern Illinois.

To be eligible for U.S. citizenship, an applicant must meet the following requirements:

- Be 18 years of age or older;
- Be a Legal Permanent Resident ("Green Card" holder) for at least 5 years, or 3 years if married to a U.S. citizen.
- Be a person of good moral character;
- Be able to speak, read, write and understand ordinary English words and phrases; and
- Be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of U.S. history and principles of government.

The INS has provided immigration benefits, including the naturalization of new citizens, to Illinois immigrants since July 1, 1897. Granting U.S. citizenship to eligible applicants remains a top priority of the INS nationwide. During the last fiscal year, which ended on September 30, the INS naturalized more than 40,000 new citizens in the state of Illinois.

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The Oath of Allegiance for New Citizens

*I hereby declare, on oath,
that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any
foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been
a subject or citizen;*

*that I will support and defend the Constitution and the laws of the United States of
America against all enemies, foreign and domestic;
that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same;
that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law;
that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States
when required by the law;
that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required
by the law; and
that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion;
so help me God.*